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**TRAINING OF RESEARCH STAFF AT THE HUMANITARIAN**  
**ACADEMIC INSTITUTE: TRADITION, REFORMS, PROSPECTS**

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**Abstract**

This article discusses the problem of training research staff, which is relevant for the humanities, which have had their own academic traditions transformed during the reforms in science and education. The negative consequences of these reforms have had a significant impact on staff training. The organization of Soviet science involved the training of young researchers in graduate schools. In addition, the leading universities had internships, which divided young researchers into two categories: intern-researchers and intern-teachers. Since the early 2000s, the Russian Academy of Sciences has paid serious attention to staff training. Schools-conferences for young researchers, basic departments of universities in academic institutes have been created, competitive selections for the positions of young scientists have been carried out. This process had positive results. On the example of one of the oldest scientific institutes of the North Caucasus – the North Ossetian Institute for Humanitarian and Social Research named after V.I. Abayev – the process of training research staff is analyzed from 2000 till present. During this period, the scientific and educational sphere was transformed, which violated the existing system of training of young researchers, offered new opportunities, but jeopardized staff training for proper scientific activities. The article analyzes educational activities of the Institute, identifies weaknesses and mistakes of the reform process and its negative results. Measures to restore the destroyed system, adapt it to new conditions of scientific activity are suggested.

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*Keywords:* Academic institute, training, reforms, prospects



## **1. Introduction**

The history of the Institute began in October 1919, when the Ossetian Historical and Philological Society was created. It was "the first scientific institution of mountain peoples aimed at collecting and studying historical monuments." In 1923, the Ossetian Historical and Philological Society was registered as a scientific institution subordinate to the Main Science of Russia. In 1925, the Society was transformed into the Ossetian Research Institute of Local History (OSRLH, 2019). During this period, the foundations of the first scientific directions were laid – folklore, nartology, linguistics, history, and ethnography. At this stage, the staff policy was outlined: the institute aimed to create the Mountain Institute of Public Education with a department of Caucasian Studies (Kanukova, 2010). Then, the Institute implemented its own postgraduate course and began to train new staff (Tsorieva, 2014). Possibilities for postgraduate studies in Moscow, Leningrad and Tbilisi were also identified.

The 1990s destroyed scientific and educational contacts, brought devastation and a serious outflow of the middle generation and youth from science. However, the Institute survived. In 2000, the positive recovery process began (Gatsalova & Kanukova, 2008). However, the reform of the Russian Academy of Sciences brought new problems: the regional institutes found themselves outside the RAS, they were brought under control of the Federal Agency for Scientific Organizations and restructured into scientific centers. During the reform, the institutions lost their license for educational activities. The situation worsened with the adoption of the Law on Science and announcement of postgraduate studies as a stage of higher education. The analysis of the path of the Institute made it possible to identify mistakes, negative consequences and develop recommendations for optimizing staff training.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The main result of the Institute's activities is the creation of Ossetian studies as a complex scientific direction, which includes research and training in the field of linguistics, folklore, literature, history, archeology, ethnology, socio-political research in the broad context of world and Russian history and culture. The article studies traditions, transformations, including negative ones, in the training of research staff since the beginning of the 2000s, saturated with various reforms of the scientific and educational system. Negative consequences are identified and measures to optimize the training of research staff in the humanities are suggested.

## **3. Research Questions**

The training of scientific staff is a process that determines the future of each scientific field. In the humanitarian regional science, its relevance is much higher and acquires social and political significance. The general problem of falsification of history and culture depends on the quality of staff training. The subject of the research is a continuous process of staff training in the humanitarian sphere, forms of work with students, including postgraduate ones.

#### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose is to study the experience of the scientific institute, characteristic of the entire regional scientific community, identify negative consequences inevitable during accelerated reforms, and develop measures to restore and develop the process of staff training in the humanitarian sphere.

#### **5. Research Methods**

The empirical research method based on factual materials characterizing educational activities of the Institute is applied. The interpretation of this material was carried out on the basis of the comparative historical method and the method of scientific reliability and objectivity.

#### **6. Findings**

At the beginning of the twentieth century, in difficult conditions of the Civil War and post-war chaos in Ossetia, there were people who understood the value of historical and cultural heritage, the need to preserve and study it and train scientific staff in Ossetian studies. The collection of monuments of folk art, folklore and ethnographic materials has become an important area of the Society's activities. Famous singers-storytellers were invited from mountain villages. Much attention was paid to the collection and harmonization of Ossetian folk songs (melodies), study of folk music Ossetian theatrical art. The Society has developed a competent and professional methodology for collecting field materials as a corpus of texts, which became the foundation for the future series "Monuments of Ossetian Folk Art".

At the initial stages of science formation, the staff policy of the Institute developed. The Ossetian national school became a subject of special concern, actualized in connection with the decree of the Soviet government on teaching in native languages. The institute announced competitions for teaching aids, developed a methodology for teaching the Ossetian language. In order to train qualified staff, the Institute petitioned for the creation of the Mountain Institute of Public Education (Gutieva, 2007), appealed to the Council of Professors of the Polytechnic Institute justifying the need to create a Department of Caucasian and Ossetian Studies in the Institute.

Later, the Institute opened its own postgraduate school, and established ties with scientific and educational centers in Moscow, Leningrad, Tbilisi (Ossetians, 2012), where future Ossetian scientists – historians, archaeologists, philologists, ethnologists – were trained.

During the perestroika, the political regime, the economic structure and social consciousness changed, scientific contacts were destroyed; all scientific institutions were tested for strength. The Institute survived, despite its restructuring that was carried out to save money. At that time, there was no postgraduate school, postgraduate students were not sent to the capital's centers, there was a serious outflow of young people from science.

However, since the beginning of 2000, the Institute found itself under the wing of the Russian Academy of Sciences, under its scientific and methodological guidance, which contributed to its revival. One of the directions of the Institute's development strategy was the integration of science and education, scientific and educational activities.

In 2006, within the integration of academic and university science, in order to involve young people in research activities, encourage scientific creativity of young scientists, study the modern methodology of humanitarian and interdisciplinary research, the Scientific and Educational Center "Humanities" was created. It consisted of four postgraduate schools in history, ethnology, linguistics and literary studies which later became the basic departments of the North Ossetian State University and the North Ossetian Pedagogical Institute.

The center trained staff in graduate schools, organized scientific internships, scientific events and implemented popular science projects for schoolchildren and students.

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In 2006, the first School-Conference of Young Scientists took place in the Institute. It has become one of the flagship international scientific events of OSRLH. The Summer School-Conference was aimed at studying the modern methodology of humanitarian research. The forum program includes lectures, master classes, seminars, round tables and breakout sessions. Leading humanities scientists of the Russian Federation are invited to deliver lectures and conduct master classes. Young specialists in the field of history, ethnology, cultural studies, archeology, linguistics, folklore studies, literary studies, sociology and other humanitarian disciplines, students and postgraduates of the North Caucasus Federal District, Turkey, Iran, Bulgaria, Italy, Japan, Austria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia take part in the conference. The school-conference is held in the open-air format at tourist centers of the picturesque gorges of North Ossetia.

In 2007, the Institute began to hold a School-Seminar for Young Scientists, which was transformed into an annual conference of young scientists "The Caucasus in its past and present: history, archeology, culture ". It is held as part of the celebration of the Day of Russian Science together with university historians. Representatives of the scientific community of North and South Ossetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Dagestan and the Chechen Republic take part in the work of the winter school-conference. The School-Conference has become a recognizable and authoritative platform for communication of young scientists from the North Caucasus. The joint project creates favorable conditions for relevant scientific research.

For young philologists, there is a special section during the Guriev Readings. The Institute decided to hold commemorative readings for linguists, folklorists and literary critics, developing the scientific school founded by T.A. Guriev (Kanukova, 2018).

The school-conference, which has become an authoritative international platform for training young humanitarians, has its journal – *Izvestia of OSRLH. School of Young Scientists*". In addition, there is a book series "First Monograph". More than 20 monographs based on PhD theses were published (OSRLH, 2019).

The postgraduate school of the Institute has trained dozens of highly qualified specialists in history, ethnology, linguistics and literature.

In July 2014, young scientists of the Institute took part in the six-day Summer School "Science vs Life", held by Skolkovo Open University. To participate in the competitive selections, it was required to write an essay on topical scientific topics. The young scientists of the Institute, along with representatives

from the leading research institutes of Russia and other countries, developed their proposals on the goals, objectives and values of the community of young scientists.

However, during the reform of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Institute was deprived of the status of a legal entity, its license for educational activities was transferred to Vladikavkaz Scientific Center, which included various scientific institutes.

At the same time, the postgraduate school was reformed. It became a stage of higher education, and the thesis defense became optional (Krasinskaya & Klimova, 2020; Kuzu, 2020). The number of budget-funded places was reduced. Vladikavkaz Scientific Center is experiencing organizational difficulties in organizing the work of the graduate school. Representatives of the humanities and natural sciences study philosophy of science, foreign language, and pedagogy in one group which seems illogical today, since each branch of science has its own philosophy, as well as scientific texts. The Center cannot organize classes in a different way, because it requires additional funding. The Center cannot cope with the accreditation of educational activities; therefore, graduate students complete their postgraduate studies without any certificate.

The result of the reform is the lack of those wishing to enroll in such a postgraduate school. It is very difficult to persuade young people to enter the postgraduate school. One more negative result is that the Institute broke its rule and recruited two young non-degree employees. Unfortunately, the lack of the previous number of postgraduate students, and mature and professionally motivated applicants affected the quality of *Izvestiya of OSRLH. School of Young Scientists*. The series "First Monograph" has also become scarce.

The Institute decided to expand educational activities at the expense of schoolchildren. The researchers annually assess the scientific potential of schoolchildren at the republican scientific research Kolievsky student readings "Enlightener". The readings are held by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania in order to familiarize students with spiritual heritage of the Ossetian people, instill love for their native language, identify, develop and support gifted students.

The researchers of the Institute are members of the expert council of the regional competition for young researchers "Step into Science". The competition is held within the Federal Scientific and Educational Program for Creative Scientific and Technological Development of Children and Youth "National Heritage of Russia", implemented by the All-Russian Public Organization under the State Duma of the Russian Federation "National System for the Development of Scientific, Creative and Innovative Activities of Russian Youth" Integration" aimed at identifying and supporting talented young people and involving them in research activities. The researchers are experts in Shegren's student readings, deliver popular science lectures (OSRLH, 2019). These activities contribute to the development of multicultural education (Belogurov et al., 2020).

The Institute has been an active participant in the All-Russian Science Festival in Vladikavkaz. The purpose of the festival is to popularize fundamental knowledge, form a dialogue between science and society, develop interest in research activities. The employees of the Institute present exhibitions of their books, family trees, archaeological materials.

Another measure aimed at involving students in research activities of the Center "Humanities" is practical trainings. Students of the National Branch of the Faculty of Linguistics of the North Ossetian

State Pedagogical Institute take part in folklore expeditions. The main goal of the project is to help students master the skills of interviewing and recording folklore materials. Students of the Faculty of History of the North Ossetian State University undertake a pre-graduation internship e using the richest archive and library of the Institute (OSRLH, 2019). The Philological Research Laboratory was founded on the basis of the Institute in 2019.

These problems are local, but among them there are universal ones, generated by inefficient reforms. Scientific and educational activities are different areas, and research staff training has its own features. Therefore, it is necessary to renew postgraduate studies with the obligatory defense of theses.

The Russian government is supporting young researchers, establishing special prizes, giving grants, creating youth laboratories. But these measures concern representatives of natural science and engineering.

As for the youth laboratories created in recent years, their low efficiency is due to the fact that they are subdivisions of scientific centers cut off from professional scientific communities. Such laboratories should be created in specialized institutes, where young researchers are involved in research activities, use resources of the institutes, gain invaluable experience of communicating with senior colleagues, participate in scientific seminars and conferences.

## 7. Conclusion

Thus, the reform of science and education, along with innovative forms of support for young people, entailed the destruction of a well-organized and efficient system of staff training through postgraduate studies and competitive selections in academic institutions. The experience of the Institute showed that negative consequences are the reluctance to enter postgraduate school, the lack of demand for postgraduate students who were not trained to conduct research and unable to prepare a qualification work. The result of the reforms was ineffective management of educational activities by bureaucratic structures. Efficient forms of support for young scientists in the form of special journals and book series are fading away. The book itself, as a product of scientific activity, has been ousted from the academic space by strange ideas of officials and forms of scientific reports developed by them.

In order to change the existing situation, it is necessary to accelerate the adoption of the new Law on Science, restore scientific postgraduate studies, provide institutes with the right to perform independent educational activities and train research staff. It is also necessary for research institutes to cooperate with specialized departments of the Russian Academy of Sciences, especially in the field of staff training through postgraduate schools and internships. It is important to update the experience of the Russian Academy of Sciences in carrying out competitive selections for young researchers and create youth laboratories.

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